



*Pooh-Bah: It is my duty to serve as First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, both acting and elect, all rolled into one.*<sup>1</sup>

The expression *to wear too many hats* describes a common scenario of being proficient in several fields simultaneously. Contrary to the pleasure of doing-many-things, the myriad roles performed must impress an observer by charting new territory in individual style or the idiom turns condemnable—he *tried to do too many thing*. The mark having been implicitly missed. The image of a late Marilyn Monroe, over consciously bobbling topside an audition stage, across the screen, in her last musical role, *Let's Make Love*, illustrates our suspicion with the single word: specialization.

*Its unorthodox to be born in a box, but it needn't become an obsession*, points out Sir Noël Coward in *Why Must The Show Go On?*. Plaintive in tone, the lyrics, no doubt, were written after powering-through an agonizing theatrical season. The song, expressing showbiz's adversity along with the predictable rally to continue at any cost, comes with advice: if by ignoring one's impasse and aspiring towards professionalization one's led up the garden path, etc.; then don't do it!

Rather than tangle ourselves in so ideal a solution as a *preferring not to*, we've another sensibility: aesthetic, to grow a shaggy-dog. Shandyism<sup>2</sup> as it has been termed, preceding with no end in sight, our intention is to fabricate a section of the California Millinery Supply Company.

A place where truly nothing gets made.<sup>3</sup> Especially not hats.

The sculpture evokes this last remaining millinery shop in downtown Los Angeles. The store, still operational, sells fabrics, ribbons, lace, buckram hat frames and other millinery supplies. The bulk of the stock was purchased in the 1940's, and no new inventory has arrived since the early 1980's. Part museum, part index, and part artistic design the display of objects in the store celebrates their potential and acknowledges the eventual disappearance and transformation that daily commerce brings.

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert & Sullivan - *The Mikado*

<sup>2</sup> "...Shandyism was for me simply to pursue the fantasy that one evolves while reading a book like this (Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*) – although the incredible abundance of secondary literature available for a book like *Tristram Shandy* of course tends to cripple any attempt at originality. I haven't even read one tenth of it and it would be utterly impossible for me to now all of a sudden undertake a serious survey of *Tristram Shandy* research. I would have to immediately become a specialist. And that is exactly what this is not about. Instead, one must avoid this kind of specialist status and take on the thing from one's own position, one of the dilettante." Helmut Draxler interviewed by Georg Schöllhammer, *Calling into Question Yesterday's Position*, [http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft\\_text.php?textid=2026&lang=en](http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=2026&lang=en).

<sup>3</sup> "From all of the glowing reviews, I was expecting a wonderful place overflowing with fabulous millinery supplies. I was terribly disappointed. This place is like something you might see on one of those hoarder shows. What a disaster! ...I'm sorry, but three inches of dust doesn't make something vintage. It just makes it dirty. Vintage requires TLC. *True vintage* (our italics) materials shouldn't be jumbled and stuffed in dusty plastic bags and boxes. There are dusty boxes strewn about and the magic marker writing states that the box contained a certain type of feather. Surprise! It didn't. It contained some other type of cheap feather that looked like something had been gnawing at parts of them and some other detritus rolling around in the box. I was expecting some sort of vermin to come crawling out of some of the shelves because the place is THAT dusty and dirty and crammed with haphazardly strewn stuff. After the lack of quality I found in several boxes of feathers that weren't even the right type of feather according to the magic marker writing on the outside of the box, I didn't waste anymore time foraging through the filth to try to find the type of feather I initially came in for. I feel sorry for people who don't know that the feathers there are incorrectly labeled, poor quality and many are damaged. I don't even know what these poor saps are being charged for these feathers as nothing was marked." 1 out of 5 star yelp review, by Eva D., <http://www.yelp.com/biz/california-millinery-supply-los-angeles>.